

IMPRESSIONS

Undergraduate Literary and Art Magazine

Maryville College

Spring 2015

Volume 41

Brittany Scrivner - *Editor in Chief*

Sara Biorck - *Fiction Editor*

Shane Gillespie - *Poetry Editor*

Sammantha Salinas - *Non-Fiction Editor/ Copy Editor*

Raine Palmer & Kade Parker - *Copy Editors*

Natasha Kollett - *Production Manager*

Hannah Sharp - *Web Designer*

Mia Pearson - *Business Manager*

Christina Seymour - *Faculty Advisor*

Laura Barnes

Caitlin McLawhorn

Megan Burnett

Megan Sparkes

Hayley Clanton

James Troutman

Brieana Kepley

Impressions is an annual, undergraduate literary and art magazine.

Submissions or questions can be directed to
impressions@my.maryvillecollege.edu

Online editions of *Impressions* can be viewed at
impressionsmc.com.

EDITOR'S NOTE

W. H. Auden once said, "All I have is a voice." Possessing a voice is an essential part of what makes us human. Possessing a voice that demands to be heard is what sets the artist apart from other people. Impressions has been providing a platform for Maryville students to share their voices for forty-one years. Those voices have been from all different genders, races, socioeconomic classes and cultures. The editorial staff of Impressions has loved presenting all of these voices, and maintains that presenting different perspectives is an essential part of literature and art. Impressions is just as interested in sharing the voice of the individual. The voice that is not bound by categories or labels is the most pure and free voice of all. The voice of the artist who shirks off those distinctions can be most identified with by all members of the artistic community; able to inspire all people instead of being bound by limitations. These voices are the reason Impressions exists, and I thank you on behalf of our staff for allowing us to share them.

Brian Reid *Shelf Life, cover art*

I don't do this for anyone but the gay kids.
gays who don't have crap, but friends with knives out
ready to stab them in their backs.
stuck in the closet with no color but pitch black
wedged in between polyester panic attacks.
people point out flaws before he even knew they were
there
why should they care?
it's not like it's theirs.
Haters send prayer like Gay is rare, like it is his cross to
bare.
Constantly hoping nobody knows unable to trust friends
like foes
hate is all he knows.
I was Done playing pretend
but, still scared to lose friends who in the end turned out
to be fake.
I thought I had so much at stake.
With nothing left there's nothing for them to take.
I decided that If being myself is against the law then I was
going to live life lawless and remain **FLAWLESS**.
The closet may hide your identity
but slurs that scorch the soul take a toll you can't control.
Haters think they're clever to treat others like they're lesser
but
if we expect things to get better
it's time we come out together.

www.facebook.com/theprideartist

CONTENTS

STAFF	4
EDITOR'S NOTE	6
ARTIST'S STATEMENT	7
CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES	78
AWARDS	84
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	85
Madison Bakri	
<i>Untitled Photo</i>	57
Sara Biorck	
<i>Darkness</i>	10
<i>Where Did I park?</i>	19
Sarah Bond	
<i>Too Much</i>	20
Jessica Callihan	
<i>Untitled Photo</i>	58
<i>Untitled Photo</i>	59
Caitlyn Gardner	
<i>Morning Dew</i>	60
Shane Gillespie	
<i>While You Slept</i>	21
<i>Bless, Linger, Hang</i>	23
<i>I Want</i>	24
Brieana Kepley	
<i>River's Edge</i>	25
<i>Creation</i>	33
<i>Water</i>	34
Taylor King	
<i>Caballito Quinn</i>	61
<i>Blue Ice</i>	62

Natasha Kollett	
<i>Desperation</i>	35
<i>Imitation of an Emily Dickinson Poem</i>	43
Joshua Loomis	
<i>A Senior Portrait</i>	44
<i>STD</i>	45
Caitlin McLawhorn	
<i>A Momentary Relapse</i>	46
Onyeka Ononye	
<i>1929</i>	48
Raine Palmer	
<i>From the Sky</i>	50
Kade Parker	
<i>Haikus</i>	54
<i>Red Prius</i>	66
Ethan Paterson	
<i>Ode to a Whisker</i>	69
Mia Pearson	
<i>Liquored Love</i>	70
Brian Reid	
<i>Madonna and Child</i>	63
<i>This is How I've Been Feeling</i>	64
Sammantha Salinas	
<i>Break the Chains of Shakespeare</i>	71
Caleb Smith	
<i>Running Tiger in the Snow</i>	72
Megan Sparkes	
<i>Murder in Louisiana</i>	73
<i>Drowning</i>	74
<i>Kernels</i>	76
Germani Williams	
<i>Recap</i>	77

Sara Biorck
Darkness

I remember thinking “God, woman, just stop screaming, please.” This was over a year ago now, but the memory is still fresh. I had come into your house and ruined your clean floor with my feathers falling out in my stress. I hadn’t meant to, but the back door was open and I just wanted to come inside that one time. You lived in such splendor...So many wonderful things to see, to touch! But you kept everything locked away in mahogany cabinets that never knew the feeling of a thin layer of dust, or put up in drawers that concealed their radiance. Everything was always kept nice and tidy, a product I’m sure was the result of your housekeeper who worked day and night to make you happy.

I often still see her walking back from your house to her own, the guesthouse you call it, but she is anything but welcome there. You only put her there because you were tired of her being late to work everyday because the bus isn’t reliable. She is black too, but I guess you hated my kind of black, because you never let me inside your home as a guest, as if somehow as a blackbird, as a crow, I was less than nothing.

I digress, there is more to the story, and since I’ve got you here finally ready to listen to me, I might as well tell it right. I remember you screamed at me, cursed me for having come inside, told me I had no right to be there where only proper white people could live. You called me a great deal of awful things, but what hurt most was “You nasty black thing!” Reflecting on that, I know I am not nasty, but you are right, I don’t bathe in a tub with a golden faucet and sometimes I will go days without a wash because

my family never thought it was something to make a great fuss over. Yes, I’ve seen your bathroom, though only from behind the glass panes of the second floor windows. I liked to watch you, sometimes, because it seemed odd that you were so focused on scrubbing yourself. I imagined it would hurt a great deal...I would have ended up pulling out my feathers if I had tried to clean myself that hard. I had been watching you because I wanted to see if the rest of your house looked as brilliant as the dining room, the only thing I had ever seen up to that point because your porch was under construction. Every change of seasons you redecorated, changed the plants, brought in new bobbles and trinkets to catch my eye. For the past year prior to our encounter, that had been enough to sustain me because every couple of months something new would show up on your deck and I could spend my free time indulging in your extravagance. But back then I had seen it all; those decorations were the same as the year before’s, and I was bored of them.

I used to love them, almost worship them really, when I was younger. The giant sunflowers you would plant in the summer brought the most wonderful seeds by the end of August and my mother would bring me a few when you were too caught up in your company to notice. The poinsettias of the winter were another favorite, though I didn’t dare go near them when I saw your family dog die from eating their bloody petals. Mother used to call them the death flowers and I have avoided their company ever since. There’s a reason we’re thought of as wise birds, you know? It’s not all senseless mythology and folklore.

Anyway, I say all that as though it was such a long time ago. In reality it was only a year, but girls become attracted to boys in that short of a time, and women can become mothers. I'm a mother now too, though perhaps at too young an age. I'm sure you would have something to say about that at your gossip parties behind my back, which consist of little more than bridge and tea, and they would be delighted to hear of my 'scandalous pregnancy' if I was human, but that's not the point. You have always had strong opinions on everything and I don't believe tact or manners was something your mother ever taught you, unlike mine, and I would never be so cruel to you as you were to me then.

That night a year ago, you had chased me around the house for fifteen minutes or so before I realized we were going in circles. I know that now because the swing of the giant pendulum from the old grandfather clock didn't escape my notice, and I had watched the hands of the clock as they moved and ticked. I'm not as stupid as you think, but I will admit it's taken me a long while to be able to tell time. I learned from watching your daily routine, and paying attention to how long it took you to do things. I would say that moment equates to just about the same amount of time it takes you every morning to get up, make your coffee, and yell at the paperboy for throwing your paper too far to the right or left. I would just be grateful for getting the paper at all, but that's just me. I knew the way out, or at least I thought I did back then

(sometimes the glimpses of myself in the windows gives me pause), but somehow watching you get so worked up over my being there and causing you such "grief" gave me the most gratifying sense of pleasure. There was just something about watching you huff and puff after me only to stop to fix your hair because you were afraid the neighbors might look in and see you in such a state that made me cry out with almost childish scorn. I suppose I haven't grown up entirely if I can sit here and mock you for the way you were born, uptight and frivolous. Mother would have told me to behave myself, bite my tongue and "play pretty," but she had been too kind of heart to see your own blackness of heart like I now know exists.

I doubt you are curious, but I will tell you my mother brought my family here in the spring of '93, hoping for somewhere safe and quiet to raise a family. For a while it worked out well enough. I was too young to really understand much more than what went on inside of my own nest. Dad left mom, my two brothers, and me before I could do much more than chirp. That was normal I suppose—I have never met someone whose family didn't have something like that happen to them. I was left a little broken, I guess you could say, always kind of wondering why but never bothering to trouble my mother with asking her. She was too busy making sure we stayed out of trouble, away from your cat's mouth, and that we got enough to eat, which was hard enough as it was without me causing unnecessary sorrow. I tried to occupy my mind with other

things because of that, and that kind of brings me to where we are now. I grew up in your shadow, continuously amazed by the things I saw from my own modest little nest of sticks, string, and good old fashioned spit. Yours was a palace in comparison, a golden chapel almost surreal in its beauty. I saw how you filled your life with possessions and things, and they seemed to make you happy. It wasn't until well after I had grown and left home that I began to take a closer look into your life.

You kept everything orderly almost by compulsion, nothing out of place and well maintained. Everything you owned was of the highest possible quality and you tended to your knickknacks and bobbits as though your life depended upon it. I realize now this was because you lost your husband years before my family came to the area, before his time, as I understood it, which was a strange concept to me. In my experience, you can get hit by a car, eaten by a hawk, or die for any number of reasons on any given day. Your time isn't guaranteed, so why you humans think you are entitled to more than every other creature, I'm not sure.

Regardless, you needed something to occupy your mind, and I could sympathize because I had sought the same thing in seeking you out. I needed a distraction and so did you. In a way, we compliment one another. I don't know where or when that obsession of mine turned into something of scorn for you. You couldn't help yourself anymore than I can now, but I was far too invested back then.

I was brave enough to enter your home, and I had to know where that would go.

I remember I had rounded a corner, pushed my way through the narrow slit between the door and its frame as one of your servants made her way from the dining room into the kitchen. She screamed too, but that was nothing new to me. I was a "nasty black thing," making you suffer to suit my own curiosity.

Your kitchen was splayed out before me, and I had marveled at the mass of assembled copper pots and pans which hung from hooks along the walls. I could see myself in them, my darkness reflected. You finally came in after me waving your arms with a slew of servants behind you, some crying out for you to spare me, others assuring you I was in the wrong. I'm not really sure who was right back then, but I can't help but think it doesn't matter now and it didn't matter then. I narrowly missed the rough hands of one of your gardeners, an older man I was surprised to see still chasing after me when I dashed into the hall then cut another corner and ducked into the study. He still chases me from time to time when I pick at your garden.

There was little there in that study that interested me, I recall. First edition books lined the shelves but they were of little importance; for once there was something of yours that gave me no pleasure.

My mother couldn't read and I never learned. I've done well enough without it. I am clever in a different way. Not street smarts, but more instinct. That same almost primal

urge pushes me forward toward. I thought back then that I had had enough to know you from the outside in, but it did me little good. While I was trapped in thought, I remember you had managed to close both doors to the study. Three of your servants flanked me and you stood before me, your face a shade of livid red from your exertions of having run after me and bellowed your displeasure. You would have made for a fine angry bear, the way you carry on. Hush now, I'm almost done with my story. I should have owned up to my crimes and confessed I never intended to let things go that far, though. I wanted to see the place where madness lived and where the material outweighed the moral, but now looking back I think it would have been better if I had stayed out of sight and watched you in my own form of secret observation. At least there I wouldn't have been cornered and forced to face the very real threat of finding something worse inside that house than your hording. I hid behind the globe but I knew that would do me no good. You could see me and so could the servants. I should have reasoned with you, talked you out of your delirium and tried to come to some common ground. 'I came here because I admired your work,' I should have said, or maybe, 'I wanted to know if you really did have such splendid taste as they say,' but nothing came out. Instead I just looked on you, indifferent, though I must admit I was out of my mind with fear at the time. You could have easily brought the copper pot you brandished in your hands down on me and broken my

neck with one fell swoop. Perhaps you're wishing now that you had. My only consolation then was that you probably wouldn't do that because it would have gotten blood on your Persian rug and that stain would never have washed out, even if you managed to clean way down deep. You rushed toward me and I caught a glimpse of something wondrous hanging from your neck. You remember that, I see. It was the most perfect of diamonds set into a gold wedding ring, and a large band, much thicker in size, clung to it as well. The chain holding it was thin, but no less stunning. They were a mated pair, a beautiful symbol whose meaning passed right over my head. Your kind call them symbols of love and faithfulness. I just thought it was shiny and knew I wanted it. I couldn't help myself; that right there dangling before me was too much and I know now why it was I couldn't leave there before that was done. You lunged at me and I moved toward you, and we fought, black and white. When we broke away, I took the thin little chain and the wedding rings. You screamed out, but more in terror of losing what I had taken, I suspect. Everyone else was too much in shock to do much more than stare when I turned and forced my way up through the chimney and out. I came out blacker than ever, but the soot and ash disappeared quickly enough once I was in the air. I clutched your bands and chain in my claws, and I was just about to turn and leave that place, which has so long enamored me and still does today, when I heard from down below from the chimney your cry of "You damned black bird!"

The sound was enough for me. I left you and veered off
toward my hovel, contented with my treasure and the
knowledge of humans you gave me.

There is nothing quite like the darkness, I'll have
you know, but you're just as dark as I am. No more pre-
tending.

Sara Biorck
Where Did I Park?

There's that one moment
When you're standing outside
Of the Wal-Mart
Looking around the parking lot
Thinking where the hell did I park.
And you know it was in Aisle 7
Or perhaps Aisle 16
And the bag of frozen
Microwaveable meals is slowly
Melting in the heat
And all the while
All you can think to do
Is grumble below your breath,
And walk down every row
Clicking your car alarm button
Hoping to hear your wail
Over everyone else's.

Sarah Bond

Too Much

I'm too much.
Too much in everything, really.
I swear too much.
I talk too much.
I text too much.
I love too much.
I cry too much.
I fail too much.
It's uncomfortable,
Being full of too much.
So, it seeps out more.
I bake too much bread.
I make too much pasta.
I buy too much candy.
I apparently love food
 Too much.
And now I've done it...
I've said "too much"
 Too much
To where now it means nothing.
I'm nothing.

Shane Gellespie

While You Slept

Somewhere between her
Small, slumbering whimpers
And her bare stomach
I found solace today.

Somewhere between 11AM
And 2PM, cultured in
The red hue of the room,
I couldn't take my eyes off her--
Drinking every inch of her skin
Like the last drop of water on earth.

Somewhere between this space separating
us,
(This space that I am constantly trying to
shrink--
Pulling her closer and tighter to my chest,
Burying my face into the small of her
back,
burning to have all of her against me)
I find realizations.

I want to be with her so fucking bad
That being with her
Doesn't even feel like enough.
I want to learn to say I love her
In every language so that maybe one of
Them sounds right...
But I doubt any of them will.

Shane Gellespie
Bless, Linger, Hang

But I don't want to draw my attention
away
from the iridescent lampposts
or
the flat black sky chalked with partially
hanging
clouds, like faded ivory keys on a
Steinway
or the virtually entirely burned cigarette
in
my hand you just held so faithfully and
innocently.
I would rather burn heaven to
ash
than deceive you or see you hurt for a
moment.
My god, you resonate God to me.
I feel like I could write a poem, but I can't take my
attention
away from how your pastel lips still
Bless
Linger
Hang
on my undeserving counterpart.

So for now,
I guess she will just have to trust me
When I say that I feel like I have a million
Cities burning to nothing inside of me for her,
Billions of people dying, burning alive,
Historic monuments collapsing
To smoldering ashes...
And the truth is,
I wouldn't put a single goddamn ember out.

Shane Gellespie

I Want

I want to take you to a beach town;
Small
Empty
Little houses so far apart
That you know they're there
But you don't seem them.

I want to fall in love with you
Again
In a lighthouse.
I want to go somewhere that the coastal wind
Smells like your beige sweater.

I want the ocean salt to coat your torso
So I can taste your skin will all the
Heaviness
Of the
Sea.

Brieana Kepley

River's Edge

Drip...Drip..Drip.
Opening her eyes slowly, Sharon gazed up into the cavernous abyss over her head. Her arms and legs felt like lead, and as she let her tongue roll about her mouth she wondered if a desert had more water than her.

Pushing herself up, she sat and let her eyes register all that was about her. The more she thought of it, the more she could imagine that she had somehow been thrown down into this hell like some forgotten children's plaything. It was her chest now, heaving with a twinge of pain that grabbed her attention, and the scratchiness of her throat that moved her eyes skyward as if her answers lie there.

Grey stone was everywhere covered with tiny rivulets of water connecting together like veins. Stalactites and stalagmites were dotted sporadically like monumental pillars left by an ancient civilization in a parody of life. Behind the ever present drip Sharon thought she might have even heard the sound of running water. Not so fast to have been violent, but a river that ran far and true, unending and unyielding. The type of river that would outlast time itself.

A freezing feeling shook her, and yet all she could do was bring her frigid hands up to herself and wrap them tightly around each arm as if she could warm her very bones with the simple action.

Frightened, Sharon rose to her feet her teeth chattering uncontrollably. Though she had a precarious feeling, like

her knees would buckle under her like some unsound structure, she straitened her spine with the shreds of her courage and composed herself. She had no idea how it was she got to such a forsaken place. Breathing deeply to keep herself from hyperventilating, she tried to remember the events that lead to her ending up in this tomb. The only memory that seemed to present itself was the sun. Oh how she wished for the sun right then in that dark and gloomy cave. Water continued to drip a constant metronome of madness and all she wished for was a way out. "But is it safe," Sharon asked herself, "to wander when I'm already lost? Surely someone must be looking for me."

With a tap of her foot on the ground impatiently, she let her dry tongue roam her mouth in thought. She was so thirsty. Thirsty enough, she thought, to leave her spot. She would only be away for a few seconds, long enough to drink her fill at the riverside and scurry back. Nodding her head in silent agreement with herself, she screwed up all her courage and reassured herself, "I'll only be a moment, then, when I get back they'll find me, I'm sure of it." Sharon searched through the pressing darkness, saw a single way out of her little hollow room, and knew that she must go through it with caution but haste. Arms still wrapped securely around herself, more to comfort now than to keep her warm, she took the first daunting step into the small corridor. As she walked Sharon could hear her footsteps echoing back to her interacting with the already present noise as if she was creating her own type of symphony of cacophony.

In her mind she tried to conjure more images of the sun as if the simple thought could blow away the cobwebs of shadow and tune out the horrible and never ending dripping. If she closed her eyes she thought she could even smell the faint scent of summer grass and feel the warm tendrils of golden comfort enveloping her honey brown skin. Opening her deep green eyes once more however when she felt the corridor widen and heard the river enveloping her completely, Sharon was startled to see the silhouette of a man farther down the bank.

"I must be mistaken." She took another step and leaned to the side hoping to get a better look at the figure. It was surely a man, for he stood too tall and too broad to be anything else, yet he was so pale, pale as unspoiled winter snow. Turned towards the river as if contemplating its depths, the man did not seem to have heard or acknowledged her existence at all. "Hello there!" Calling out to the pale man, Sharon waved her hand hoping to grab his attention and snap him out of his reverie. "Do you know the way out?" After a glance over into the river, she felt thirsty but had no desire to step closer. For some reason her mind told her that there was more danger in the action of going towards the water than the simple possibility of bacteria. Cautiously she took a single step backwards and slowly made her way closer to the pale man. "Sir?" Bobbing her head back and forth a bit Sharon wondered what could be wrong with this man. Surely being so pale came with some drawbacks.

Once close enough she reached out her hand and touched the soft fabric of the mans shirt. He turned then achingly slowly to face her and Sharon was at once struck by the sheer intensity of his eyes. Gleaming as pale and as lonely as the many icebergs drifting in the dark arctic sea they only helped to make him seem even more ghost like as if he was only there to make her question her very own existence. In that moment she let her hand fall away from him, the memory of the feeling of solid flesh, of another being, right beneath her fingertips being the only thing that made this feel real.

"I... I don't know where I am or how I got here. Please, can you help me?" The pale man merely stared at her as he had the water, seemingly looking both through her and through her very soul all at once. "Anything, please any indication of you even noticing I'm here." Sharon could feel herself panicking again, the tiny tendrils of fear starting to claw away at her resolve. The pale man merely blinked at her his icy eyes making her shiver involuntarily and wrap her arms around herself securely once more.

"This isn't funny you know! I have to get out of here. I've got a family, I've got a dog." Again Sharon's mind conjured up images of sunshine and the smell of summer grass. She could feel the warmth of the sun heating her face and could even hear her dog barking merrily in the background, feel him circling her playfully and nipping at her heels as she walked around. "I've got school you know. I can't just wait around here."

The pale man set his eyes upon her fully for the first time and Sharon grew still. He blinked once, and she felt herself hold her breath in anticipation of what she knew not. Would that she could will him to speak, to say anything at all, but he merely stared his lips sealed. With a ragged exhale she carried on, "I have so much I want to do, so much I need to do. Even just sitting on a swing one more time would be enough for me."

In that moment she felt her body sway uncontrollably nausea overwhelming her senses and felt the tears behind her eyes as she began to beg her dry throat making her hoarse. "Please, please I'll give you whatever I can. You just have to help me. Anything will do!" Desperately she tried to cling on to the mans arm to invoke some kind of pity from him but he budged no more than if she had embraced one of the many stones. Why would he not help her?

Tears overflowing she let go of the pale man and stepped back. Throwing her hands up to her face she tried to remember how she had found her way into that claustrophobic place. Surely she could find her way back out again if she could only remember. She thought of summer, surely her mind bringing her back to that feeling must have meant something. Grabbing on to that thought she tried to conjure up the scene once more. It was summer, always summer. She knew it by the smell of the freshly cut grass, by the sun shinning on her face, she knew it by the heat that even now threatened to suffocate her. Sharon could hear her dog barking wildly. Not the bark of a dog in play, but the bark of distress,

and then the high pitched whistle of abandonment. Why was this all that she could think of? "Why can't I remember?" she sobbed.

Sharon dug her palms into her eyes and tried to drag the memory out of her psyche. The dripping all around her made it difficult, it filled up every bit of space in her mind and made it impossible to focus. The dripping, oh the constant noise of water. She needed a reprieve, she needed silence. Pulling her hands from her face she quickly covered her ears. She had to concentrate and talk her way through it. "L... I was outside." Drip. "I was with my dog." A ragged breath of a pause and she tried to dig deeper. "I was playing with my dog like usual." Drip drip.

Angry, Sharon threw her hands down and opened her eyes glaring at the pale man before her. "I can't think!" She was practically screaming, her throat soar and raw. She remembered her thirst then and she became all the more agitated. With a huff Sharon went around the man, she threw all her caution and her instincts to the wind and kneeled down to put her hands into the cool water in defiance. When she slipped her hands in Sharon thought she spied movement but only found herself looking at a distorted and pale mirror. Was that really her looking back in disheveled fright? When had her sun-kissed skin become so pale?

In that moment she felt herself lurch forward before she diverted the momentum and rolled herself back to sit on her haunches with huge tears rolling down her face.

She remembered now. How could she have even forgotten? How had she not known by the very feel of it in her soul? It took actually touching the water and being that close to toppling head first in to it to remind her.

Staring up at the pale man accusingly she nearly spat out the words she had begun to go mad searching for. "I drowned." The event played like a horrible movie before her very eyes. A normal summers day playing with her dog, tripping, she fell into the water hitting her head as she went. There had been no chance for her to survive, no human witness to see her go, only her trusty companion that no doubt even now hovered over her watery grave whining and whimpering for his mistress to bob back to the surface. Looking on it now she wished she could have willed herself to wake. In her unconscious state she had sucked in water thinking it was life sustaining air. She could feel it now clawing its way down her throat, choking her, freezing her, preserving her.

"I was too young to die, too young to slip away unnoticed." Holding her throat in agony, Sharon made her way to her feet once more and approached the pale man in rage. "Did you hear me? I was too young to die! Twenty-three years on this earth and I had so much left to do, I had so much life!" Sobbing, she had no tears left to shed and now no hope left to even pretend that there might be an alternate ending for her. She was chilled to the bone, and alone.

With a blink, the pale man moved, and in that moment he had her full attention. Reaching out, he tugged at a single brown lock of her hair and presented it as a focal point between them. Then, sighing, he parted his pale pink lips and spoke for the first time, "We are all too young to die dear, but are we not remembered for the better for it?" The pale man gazed into Sharon's eyes for a moment more before he let go of her hair and began to walk past her.

"Wait!" Reaching out for him, she could not help but hope that he would not leave her completely alone in this all too real eternity. "Where are you going? Where will I go?" In that moment the pale man turned and offered her his hand. They both stood there gazing at each other, the moments counted out by the steady dripping of water all around them. He did not speak again, merely waited knowing that she would crumble and bend to his will.

Carefully, Sharon closed her eyes before taking his hand gingerly. As soon as they touched she felt herself become calm and even wondered how a man so like stone could be so warm like the sun. There was no agony, no remorse, not even anger left in her. In that moment she felt tranquility and peace, a peace she had never felt before in her life. As the pale man lead on she followed blindly knowing in that moment that all was as it should be. She would be remembered in her old life and she would be missed, but all and all, this, her feeling and her whole being in this moment, was surely for the best.

Briana Kepley
Creation

Would that I could tell you
How it is the world was made
A breath
A sigh
A heartbeat
Hear the stars and planets
What use is there for creation when we would tear it
down?
In that old hum of wondrous blessed sound
Sweet harmony far greater than we should know
Tell tales of giants we shall never see
Why build when we only wish to destroy?
When harmony is reached
When balance is created
I tell you that is when the world was made and all its
meaning granted

Brieana Kepley
Water

Whirling water too quick to be stopped
too strong to be seemed
Cold, dark, breathless
Not a fish
no gills to save
deep healing life gone now in water
rushed away to join with river Styx
How now does the cock crow for one who had such joy?
No
the sun rises without the crow as he is still at rest
Life goes on with weary breaths once more

Natasha Kollett
Desperation

Darkness hides all things. It hides the old duffle bag that is filled to its zipper. It hides the man that furiously digs in the night. It hides the sins of the broken man who runs into his past the more he runs away from it.

“So, Desmond, tell me... what were the conditions for leaving your last job?”

“My last job?”

He thought about the question. Well they fired me when my car broke down and I couldn't make it to work on time.

“There were cutbacks in the company and I was one to be laid off.”

“I see, well that's the last of the questions for now. We will review your application along with the others and call you if there will be a second interview. Thank you for your time, Mr. Page.”

We'll call you--that's what they all say, but they never call. At least they were kind enough to give an interview, most of them don't even give you that chance. As Desmond Page walked out of the bank he loosened the tie from around his neck and waited at the bus stop. On the ride home he pondered how he would explain to his wife that this had been yet another failed interview. When he arrived home his wife, Gretchen, was waiting for him in the kitchen.

“Well?”

She asked halfheartedly, not expecting much but still hoping for good news. Desmond looked back at her with a blank expression. His gaze dropped to the floor as she

began to go on again about how important this was for them and what he probably did wrong this time. She went on for what seemed like forever. He never paid attention to what she actually said anymore--it was always the same. Employers would never call back, his wife would always yell, and somehow it was always his fault. His fault that no one would hire him, his fault that they couldn't pay the bills, his fault that they didn't have a car anymore. She even found a way for the burnt coffee to be his fault. "Well maybe if we could afford a decent coffee maker you wouldn't have burnt coffee" she would say. "The pot we have is fine, it just can't be left on for so long or—never mind. I'll get us a new pot if that is what you want."

There was no point in arguing with her about these things, he hated to argue with her about anything. It made his blood boil to have her angry with him, and it pained him that she never saw how much he cared about her.

Desmond sat at the table with his wife. The plate of left-over spaghetti in front of him had gotten cold. He didn't care. It was the third time that week they had spaghetti for dinner. He stood up and walked to the bedroom, leaving his half-finished plate in its spot on the table.

"Des?"

"I'm getting ready for work, what is it?"

"Aren't you going to finish your dinner?"

"No time, I've got to run. Call a cab for me, would you? I've already missed the bus."

As Desmond rode to work in the back of some cab with a driver barely able to speak English, he found himself humming along to a song playing on the radio. He was almost lost in the music when he found that it had dropped out from under his own voice and now the sound coming from the radio was that of a reporter. Desmond leaned in toward the front seat to listen.

"Turn it up, please"

"...that's right Bob, this makes the third robbery from a private art collector this week. More on this story as information comes in so stay tuned. Back to you, Bob."

As her voice faded out and his song back in, Desmond slowly sat back into his seat and thought about the story.

"The world's messed up..."

He shook his head in disbelief. The cabby nodded in response—not because he cared, but because he was being polite in hopes of getting a good tip. Desmond worked as a night guard at the museum downtown. It wasn't much of a job, but it got them by. He liked working nights anyway, because it gave him time to be alone. Sometimes he would even work on his paintings to pass the time. There was never any trouble there at night, so he had a lot of free time. He had always enjoyed painting, ever since he was a child. When he was young he aspired to become a professional painter, but his dream had to be forgotten when he was forced to drop out of school to help support his mother, after his father left them. His father had never supported his dreams—never saw how much talent Desmond truly had. The more he thought about it, the more he didn't care that his father had left—he was actually kind

of happy about it. It helped him see the world for what it truly is.

Trees rushes past his face and leaves crunched rapidly beneath him. His breathing was heavy in the dense air of the late night. Paranoid, he checked over his shoulder, but tripped over an exposed root in the ground. The bag in his hand dropped in front of him. Stumbling, he found his way back onto his feet and retrieved the bag—he turned to face the path from which he had come.

[Twenty years earlier]

Another day, another fight in the Page house. Desmond sat in his room and did his math homework while trying to ignore the yelling coming from his parents downstairs. Who knows what they were fighting about, there was always something between the two of them. His father was drunk, as usual, and his mother was in tears. Desmond put down his pencil and crept out of his room. Standing timidly at the top of the staircase he looked down at his parents arguing. His father yelled something slurred as he raised his hand and slapped Desmond's mother across the face. The sound of his hand on her face rang in Desmond's ears. He expected his mother to break down, to cry and beg him to stop. She didn't—not this time. Instead she stepped back and looked at him. She looked up the stairs at Desmond, back at her husband, and then to the door. Desmond's father stormed out the front door and his mother looked to the stairs to her son, but she offered him no comfort.

Desmond came home from work to find his wife cooking breakfast. They sat across from each other and ate in silence. He often let his mind wander during meals. He liked to think about what his life could've been like under different circumstances. What would it be like to have a nice job, or a nice house, a car—the list went on forever. “Des? Where have you gone this time? You know I don't like it when you do this at the table...Desmond!” He shook off the daydream and looked up at his wife. “Huh? Oh... sorry about that.” “Desmond. We need to talk.” “We need to talk? Those words never mean anything positive.” “Yeah, about what?” “Well...I'm not really sure how to tell you this—I guess it's been coming on for a while now really, I mean, I'm surprised it hasn't happened sooner...I'm not really sure what to think about it myself yet but—” His gaze slowly dropped to the floor as she spoke and he couldn't stop himself from thinking the worst. Here it comes—she's going to leave me and find someone who could afford her a nice coffee pot. “Desmond, are you listening? I said I'm pregnant. Des, you're going to be a father!” His eyes shot up to meet hers. A father? I don't know how to be a father. “Wha—what? How? I mean...when did you find out?” “I just found out yesterday! Isn't it wonderful, Desmond?” His heart sank and questions flooded his mind.

“Yeah...wonderful. How are we going to afford this? We can barely support ourselves...how will we support anyone else?”
“I don’t know! I don’t know...but we’ll figure that out, right? Maybe you could try selling some of your sketches again?”
“Honey, they’re paintings. I paint, not sketch. Besides, no one wants my work—painters never become famous until they’re dead, remember?”

The distant sound of sirens could be heard through the trees. He continued to run until he could not go any farther. He looked to the water before him—it stretched out far into the skyline, with the moon reflecting off the still water. He closed his eyes.

It was a regular night at the museum, quiet as usual, so Desmond began to paint. As he painted, he thought about the news story he had heard on the radio. Art robbery huh? That’s bad news for this place. The heat is going to be on—the police will probably be checking out places around here before long. I wonder how they got away with it so many times. Where did my yellow paint go? Ah—there it is. This should do just fine. As he put the finishing touches on his piece, he reached down to check his phone. The text across his screen read “Meet under the bridge, tonight, 4:00.” This is it. Everything was planned and ready to go—tonight everything fell into place.

The clock read 3:58 as Desmond walked to meet the man who stood beneath the dark bridge. They were not far from the museum but the darkness of the night covered their meeting.
“Have you got it?”
Desmond hesitated. Come on...It’s for the baby, now. You can do this, Desmond!
“Ye—yes, I have it. Do you have my money?”
“Yeah I’ve got your money right here”
The man stepped from the shadow and raised up the duffle bag in his left hand.
“Now let’s see the goods.”
Desmond reached for the hard plastic tube strapped to his back as he took a step towards the man.
“That’s close enough! Put it on the ground and back away”
“Okay, but we exchange at the same time.”
“You get your money when I know I have what I want”
Desmond stepped back and slowly placed the tube on the ground and rolled it gently toward the man. The man picked up the tube and pulled from it a rolled canvas. The man unrolled the canvas and looked over his prize. He threw the duffle bag to Desmond’s feet and returned the canvas to its protective plastic shell. Desmond picked up the bag, turned from the man, and walked away from the bridge. Once Desmond was out of sight, he went out to the woods that stood just outside of town.

Still clutching the bag between his hands, Desmond opened his eyes and dropped to his knees. He pulled the pack from his back and removed the military trowel.

A cloak of fog obscured the view near the old log by the lake. There was a figure of a man standing by the shore, his prize laying by his feet. The man braced himself against the cold wind, his hands felt the sting of winter and blisters formed as he furiously dug. He raced to finish before the sun rose. He pulled from his pocket a familiar friend in steel. He took a swig of the whiskey and holds the burn in his mouth before swallowing. He buried the bag deep in the ground, filled the hole and covered the disturbed ground with leaves and the log that he stood by. The man entered his home silently. He sent his clothes down the trash disposal, right before the burning process began and then he went to shower off the grime from all that had happened to him. He paid close attention to the dirt from beneath his fingernails—there was always something left there. When his wife awoke he kissed her and suggested they move away for the baby's sake. He quit his job later that day, and never went back to the museum again. He took his family far away to a city, but he made one last fishing trip before the move. He caught no fish that day, but made sure that his family would be able to eat that night and every night after.

Natasha Kollett
Imitation of an Emily Dickinson Poem

When I found I could not live with Poetry—
She moved in—with me
In a room—Full of Eyes—
Staring—Down—at me

Since in school—I have fought—
With one persistent thought—
of a Place—where Poetry goes—to die—
Alone—before e'er tipping my tongue

Slowly I began—to Reason with my pen
Words Flowed—with readiness and ease—
My thoughts Began to Widen--from one—
As she Helped me See

Joshua Loomis
A Senior Portrait

Within these swirls
of too loud conversations
I compound myself into a
lovely chaos.
Everything is smooth
and I am not alone.
Though I am,
as I prefer,
lost.

If I work only for the
money to get by and
my debts are slowly paid
then I will be driven
into the illustrative night
of clicking and cuddling.
Who will watch me write
chill as fuck?

A little crazy,
buried whiskey bottles,
hidden encroaching adulthood,
and cops that are graciously
poor at their jobs.
We're all of an age.
On scattered foundations we build
shacks of eternity.

Promise me, oh, promise me,
all you dancing sprites,
my friends still imagining
the value of being bright,
promise me our exodus,
our exit, onto a more fabled world.

I wonder
whose legs will run
farther and whose faster
into a preferred pursuit
and whose ankles
will be sprained
and if our promises
will remain.

Joshua Loomis

STD

I had become a thousand
hedonistic hands, grasping
outwards onto bent bodies,
and clutching them close

Caitlin McLawhorn

A Momentary Relapse

It lasts for a moment.
For one moment in all existence, we are inseparable. I
cling to you as the drowning man aimlessly grasps for the
last piece of sinking boat before he falls to the endless hell
beneath him.
For this moment I am a child again. I am a child with a
diffused flame from far too many beatings, too harsh criti-
cisms, too many lies, too simple of betrayals.
I am a wounded child, I am broken. I am broken in more
ways than just right down the middle. Like your favorite
coffee cup with a missing chip where you lay your upper
lip, I am incomplete, broken.
For a moment I am a child again, burying my crying eyes
in the bosom of one I never knew. For a moment your
cruelty was gone. My despair was gone. My resentment
was gone; all bitterness, rage, gone.
You hold me as I cry, you hold me as I laugh. You hold me
as I search for the meaning of myself in this cold, unyield-
ing universe. You hold me.
And I am healed. I am healed, and as I pull away from you
to wipe my eyes, I stare past your eyes. I stare past your
eyes and into your soul. I stare through your soul and see
something more than that. I see who you really are.
For you, this has all meant nothing.

Onyeka Ononye

1929

They told me I had no power
They told me I had no place
To stand where they stood or speak when they spoke
My people, that's what they said
It was TRADITION, that's what they said
They told me I had no voice
But, I still could participate
I could get involved
No, not with my mouth
The mouth curled up from singing the 9 children to sleep
No, not with my hands
The hands buried deep grinding the ose for Egusi soup
Definitely not with my Bekee
Because the only education I ever got was
HE was in charge and I was not
So, how then I wondered
Oyibo man replied, and this is what he said
I want your taxes, that's what he said
Tax my cassava, Tax my palm oil
That was a thought my heavy bosoms couldn't handle
The story spread like wildfire through the land
Every woman palm leaf in hand.....trouble!! trouble!! with
every palpitation..trouble!! trouble!!
Yet, we stayed calm, ready and waiting
And then, into our houses they came counting
Otu, Abuo.....Ewu, okuko
It was slowly becoming real
In 1929
They said I had no voice
They were right I had a fire

They said I had no power
You guessed it, they were right...I had desire
Desire to make my presence known
So in 1929
Down in Aba I marched
I who was too little to be seen
I whose used my voice only to instruct my children
I who was a woman and irrelevant
Rose up and took my stand, raised my voice
I am FED UP, that's what I said!!!

Raine Palmer
From the Sky

They came from the heavens in the middle of the night,
first one, then two, then three, then ten.
There's just a few of them landing on the solid earth before.
You don't notice.
Late-night television and a warm blanket have stolen your full attention.
They're silent in their descent, so silent that you cannot hear them as they begin to slowly surround your home.
You should be fine.
No need to panic, even if you knew what was going on.
There's just a few for now.
Hours pass.
There are more now, following and joining their comrades who have already landed.
They're falling more frequently and in greater numbers.
You cannot see them from your window, even if you knew to look.
Your only hope to catch a glimpse, to gain any sort of warning, is to turn on the porch light, to illuminate the darkness and see the invaders.
You don't- why would you?
You have no reason to suspect what's happening outside.
You fall asleep on the couch to the sound of canned laughter from a sitcom you've never watched before.
You shiver slightly, unconsciously, but don't wake up.
There's nothing you could do anyways.
They're here to stay.
More and more continue to arrive, and they're not just surrounding your house now.
All of your neighbors, the other neighborhoods around

your suburb, and even the closest city, thirty minutes away by car, are suffering your same fate.
There's panic from most of those still awake.
They see what's happening.
There's excitement from the very few who knew that they would come.
The news has interrupted whatever late-night masterpiece had been playing on your television.
The city is in a state of emergency.
It seemed that no one had prepared for what was happening.
It's not anyone's fault.
Logically this should not be happening.
Those paranoid few that were prepared remained holed up in their homes, the only ones capable of waiting out the things still tumbling from the sky with ease.
On the television the news anchors are trying to stay calm and professional, but their smiles are strained, hollow.
Even now the mayor and emergency services are drowning in calls.
Everyone's eyes are glued to their television screens or to the world outside.
Everyone's eyes except yours, of course.
You're fine for now.
You're still asleep.
The foreign invaders wait patiently outside your door.
There are too many of them now to even count, and still more are coming.
They're waiting for you to wake up, to try to leave your home.
That's when they'll get you.

You wake up, ignorant to the world around you and the night before.
You'd managed to turn off the television in your sleep, the remote still clutched in your hands.
You stretch.
Your morning is normal, as far as you're concerned, comforting in its routine.
You shuffle into the kitchen, start a pot of coffee, and head towards the door to get the newspaper.
Your hand is on the doorknob, opening towards the outside world.
You yawn, and, eyes still closed, you take a step.
They're ready for you.
The trap is sprung.
The world outside your door is blinding in the morning light.
You can't see and suddenly you're slipping.
Slipper clad feet scramble for purchase and find none.
You're falling, falling, falling, but you don't hit the earth.
Your descent is mercifully cushioned, but now you're surrounded by an intense cold that seeps into your very bones.
You're in shock as you lay there for a moment, blinking before looking around.
Your eyes adjust, finally able to see what you had been so blind to before.
You groan loudly, realization setting in.
"Goddamn snow," You grunt, standing up unsteadily, careful not to slip on the same patch of ice on your front porch that had downed you moments before.

There had to be a foot of it, blanketing the world around you with snow and ice.
Hadn't all of the news outlets said that there was no chance yesterday evening?
It figures.
They never get anything right.
You shake off the clumps of snow still clinging to your robe, give up on getting the paper, and head back inside to call your boss to tell them that you won't be coming in today.

Kade Parker
Haikus

Hearts are for losing
Hearts are made to be broken
Aren't they pointless things?

Summer night has set.
The petals bend to the earth,
Laden down with dew

Stars shine in the pitch
There! A star falls from the black
So swift so fleeting

Lying in the grass
Our fingers interlocking
My heart pounds faster



Madison Bakri, *Untitled*

Impressions



Jessica Callihan, *Untitled*



Jessica Callihan, *Untitled*

Impressions



Caitlyn Gardner, *Morning Dew*



Taylor King, *Caballito Quinn*



Taylor King, *Blue Ice*



Brian Reid, *Madonna and Child*

Impressions



Brian Reid, *This is How I've Been Feeling*

Kade Parker
Red Prius

There was a man who drove a red Prius. He commuted to his government job each day. He would think the thoughts of one who had to entertain oneself on a long drive. He had time to do a lot of thinking now that his commute was longer. He thought of what it would be like to not have to return each evening to an empty home. He was so alone in the new apartment that he had rented. His commute was worth it though, he was closer to her. Everything would be normal once his life was back on track.

The night she walked away from him and the ring hidden in her drink was the worst night of his life. After she left he tried to forget her. He acted as if she had never interrupted his life, as if she never existed. This didn't work for long. Soon she would creep into his mind when he was trying to sleep. She was the lady who checked him out at the grocery store, if only for a moment. She was the voice on the radio. She was everywhere and a plague on his mind. He knew what he had to do. He had to find her. The real her. Then his life would finally be on track again. He followed her to the apartment she was living in. It was on the seedy side of town. Luckily there was a room in the building across the block with an unobstructed view of her bedroom window.

There was a young aspiring actor who had lived there for only a month or so. The others who lived in the building were saying that he must have gotten his big break and left. It sure was odd how much of his belong were left behind. The new guy moved in awfully fast.

The longer commute provided him with the time to think of how he would get his life back on track. How he could

get what he wanted. When he wasn't at the office he was watching her through his telescope. She never liked his telescope, she said that it was a waste of space and that he'd never use it in the city. He always wanted to move them to the country. His company could transfer them to another branch. Maybe he will move anyway once this is all over. Once his life is back on track

* * *

She stumbled into her dark apartment, maybe she had drank a little much. Good thing she got a cab. She was thinking that she had left some lights on before she left. She wondered if she had forgotten to pay rent again as she tried the switch by the door. Nothing happened. She never had to take care of such things when she was with him. He was always so good with money. She pushes him from her thoughts as she struggles to find the lamp—letting out a string of curses that would have surprised even the surliest of sailors—as her shin connected with the heavy oak coffee table. When she clicked the lamp the light turned on. She was relieved. It still didn't explain why the light switch didn't work. Perhaps it was a burned out bulb. She moved towards the bathroom and drew herself a bath. As she was undressing and had her shirt over her head, it happened.

* * *

He stared her in the eyes as he removed the blade that had been lodged into her back. In the reflection of the mirror he watched her die. It wasn't as spectacular as he had expected. She just... died. As her body slumped to the floor she let out an utterance that he never heard. He didn't really care.

He was thinking about how pathetic her lifeless body was with her shirt half off and around her arms. He wondered how such a creature could have caused him so much agony. The blood was pooling around her now, staining her hair and matting it to the floor. He left the room with her cold, still body bleeding in the floor without a second glance. She was erased from his life. Now that she was gone his life could get back on track. The neighborhood came out to see their new neighbor. He seemed like a nice man.

Ethan Patterson
Ode to a Whisker

I see you there, springy interloper,
Venturing a little farther than your fellows
Into the intervening space between goatee and soul-patch.
Are you a leader or a prophet?
Will others follow you sooner or later,
To fill in my young-man's beard
And make me like my father?
You are not like the fuzz that came before you.
You speak not of things to come, but of things coming to
fruition,
Not of budding manhood, but of its ripening.
Others will not notice you; they see only the big changes,
But I see you. I know what you mean.
Will I live long enough for you to coarsen, blacken?
Will you be indistinguishable among the scruff?
Will I one day see you turned gray?
For now you are like me.

Mia Pearson

Liquored Love

I choked on you.
I choked on you like the first shot I ever took
Choked on you like cheap vodka in a shot glass too
Big for my mouth.
It started with a drink.
It started with the way I swallowed your eyes
Amber brown and over ice, with a kick
That would knock me senseless
Again and again—
It started innocent enough.
I got drunk off you,
Got drunk off the security
Like absinth, got drunk off the assurance
That you would always make me forget...
Then I find myself lying on the couch
Room spinning, palms sweating
I smell the whiskey on you and
I'm choking.
Choking on the things I couldn't quite digest
Choking on the things you left me to regret—
I'm choking, but all I can think is God
Damn, isn't this great?

Sammantha Salinas

Break the Chains of Shakespeare

The bard was not the greatest.
He was chosen by the droolies
And the roses, of Britain,
Which isn't saying much.

Caleb Smith
Running Tiger in the Snow

Running tiger in the snow,
Where lurk thy golden eyes,
The sun and moon their light forgo;
Thy beating heart despise.

Upon thy hard and woven scars
Does scourge the winter's breath.
Its having rolled against thy soul
Doth wreak the scent of death.

For dirth of days, for wealth of want,
Thy breast in agon' groans.
Thy hunger is thy only feast,
Thy loneliness thy home.

Where in the ice thy footsteps plunge,
So too once millions tore.
Yet snow, the dead, their lives expunged.
Thou too shall speak no more.

Live and strive and groan and die.
The falling crystals stray.
Run you shall and know not why
Beneath the silent grey.

Running tiger in the snow,
I see thy golden eyes.
I crawl into thy empty soul.
Thy soul crawls into mine.

Megan Sparkes
Murder in Louisiana

I could hardly see through the torrential rain as Dave's beat up truck approached, sputtering curses into the night. In the marshland the boy cut the tinny engine and sputtered to a stop. This boy became a monster, and his story is the door to the basement you're afraid to open. Some call him the reaper, the rapist, the sadist. His eyes are coals set ablaze; his hands stained with copper. "I thought we were done with this dirty business," I say. He hands me a shovel, I help dig through the bog. The rust from the handle stains my hands, making them dirty just like Dave's. The wood splinters, pierces my skin like nails. Dave doesn't look up, not at all, from the task at hand. Our shovels clang off rocks, snap sticks. I think of the bones of the people who are buried here. The hole grows larger, thick mud oozing from the walls like blood from an open wound. The wind lifts Dave's black coat from his paper-white skin to look like bat wings. He smiles, jagged shark teeth, and opens the back of his truck. My stomach clenches and I swallow bile as I inhale the ichor and rot. Beautiful, that figure under the sheet. Delicate porcelain doll voodoo cursed. She's a tribute, another piece of purity for this forsaken place of lost innocence. Dave lifts as I clutch the cross around my neck. Purple streaks of lightning lace themselves around the limbs of the nameless, frail ghost he holds in his arms. Down the hole goes yet another future, damned under the earth. Just like a reoccurring nightmare, we bury her out of sight. After the candles went out, wicked prayers said, Dave was gone, and in the end, one even knew what happened that night...as the rain continued to fall.

Megan Sparkes

Drowning

I am jealous of water.
Equally powerful and poised,
it pulses over my thin chicken skin,
down my frail spine, starved frame.
I'm still standing in it
long after you leave.
Tendrils of hair stick
to my cheeks in stiff clumps.
I have no desire to move,
so instead I dream.
I dream about mornings,
my nose nestled in your neck,
our communication of breaths
and heartbeats, your strong arms
wrapped around me,
so safe.
I awoke to a nightmare, and left
from under the water and stared
at myself, at the mystified girl
in the mirror.
I couldn't wait...to rip her open.
I couldn't wait...to make her bleed.
Blood streaming down arms, black
mascara stains...I don't know why
I called you.
It was my last,
desperate plea.
But why would I let you in
after trying so damn hard
to shut you out?

Sometimes I wonder how long
I will have to drown in your sea
until I can just let go,
and allow the water to consume me.

Megan Sparkes
Kernels

I have mighty ears,
golden and large.
They like to listen
to the beetles under
ground and the sound
of a seed quivering...

Germani Williams
Recap

I never felt more
Alone than those nights
That I laid in your arms
Listening to a heart
That didn't beat for me.

CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

Madison Bakri

Madison Bakri I'm a sophomore, and I'm majoring in Design. Freshman year I had the pleasure of taking a photography class and a drawing class at Maryville College. "In my photographs, I like to take pictures of everyday things but portray it in a way that it isn't normally seen. For example, zooming in on the subject or making the subject off center so only half of it shows in the photograph. In my drawings, I like to use pen and focus on details. Many of my drawings incorporate small, intricate designs."

Sara Biorck

Sara Biorck is a senior English Literature major with a Writing and Communications minor. She currently serves as the Fiction Editor of Impressions, though she has served as a Productions Manager in previous years. Writing inspires, destroys, and evolves. It commands and captivates, and draws bare the individual beneath the written word.

Sarah Bond

Sarah Bond, senior, Theatre Major and Literature Minor. "I wrote this poem while living alone in Oklahoma for my summer job. I was feeling all of these awful thoughts, so I sat down and wrote this poem in one shot. Then, all of my anxiety went away! Writing makes me more nervous than anything, but I find it is the best way to calm myself down."

Jessica Callihan

Caitlyn Gardner is a senior majoring in Psychology. "I love art because it allows for creative expression in so many different ways. My preferred art medium is photography. I adore being able to simple catch memories to keep forever as well as use photographs to expresses emotions and simple beauty."

Caitlyn Gardner

Caitlyn Gardner, Senior Psychology major. I love art because it allows for creative expression in so many different ways. My preferred art medium is photography. I adore being able to simple catch memories to keep forever as well as use photographs to expresses emotions and simple beauty

Shane Gillespie

Shane is the poetry editor for Impressions. A senior, this is Shane's third term working on the magazine, a second at which he is in this position. A Writing/Communications major, Shane enjoys writing about relationships, anxiety, and pretty much anything that inspires him.

Brieana Kepley

Brieana is a senior international studies major and enjoys baking, reading, and watching television. His favorite genres include psychological thrillers and young adult romance.

Taylor King

Taylor King is a senior Spanish Major at Maryville College. "Blue Sky" was taken in Argentina in a glacier cave.

Natasha Kollett

Natasha is a sophomore majoring in Writing/Communications with a minor in art-photography. Natasha enjoys hiking, rock climbing, and almost anything outdoors. When she's not outside, she's either writing creative fiction or watching Netflix.

Joshua Loomis

Joshua Loomis is a senior Writing Comm/Philosophy double major who is currently aspiring to a mountain of something. Words will likely be involved.

Caitlin McLawhorn

Caitlin is a senior majoring in Writing/Communications with a minor in business. She enjoys reading novels and writes poetry often. She works as a Public Relations Analyst in downtown Knoxville. When she isn't writing, Caitlin enjoys drinking hazelnut macchiatos while chatting with her favorite author, Ben Kane, on Twitter.

Onyeka Ononye

Onyeka is an MC graduate from Nigeria. She currently works at the college, where she continues to be active in student life.

Raine Palmer

Raine is a junior majoring in Writing/Communications. She enjoys writing stories both short and long and reading just about anything she can get her hands on.

Kade Parker

Kade Parker is a sophomore at Maryville College with an interest in studying biology and nutrition. When he's not studying, he enjoys being outside in any capacity possible. He loves to be in nature and he has even started his own adventure blog, logging some of his favorite hikes as well as some product reviews for outdoor equipment.

Ethan Paterson

Ethan Patterson. I am a senior. I am a Bachelor of Arts in Music major, and my interests include music, naturally, as well as the other arts and humanities in general. I am particularly interested in literature, and hope to continue writing as a hobby or even as a career, whether as my main focus or on the side.

Mia Pearson

Mia is a junior majoring in Writing/Communications with a minor in Sociology. Her favorite genre to read is fantasy/science fiction. As for writing, she mainly writes terrible poetry and depressing short stories with way too much melodrama.

Brian Reid

Brian is a rising senior majoring in fine art with a minor in business. He is a political artist who focuses mainly on human rights and self actualization. His favorite thing to do is travel to pride parades across the United States. One day he hopes to create a brand centered around the concept of equality.

Samantha Salinas

Sam is a junior Writing/Communications major with a tentative undeclared minor in art. In her free time she enjoys daydreaming, slacking off, and napping.

Caleb Smith

Caleb Smith is a Senior Philosophy major. His Poem, "Running Tiger", was inspired by William Blake's "The Tyger". It might best be described as an alternative take on the nature of the creature in question.

Megan Sparkes

Ms. Megan is a rising senior graduating in the spring of 2016 with a B.A. in Psychology and a minor in Writing/Communications. Afterward she plans to attend graduate school to pursue a Masters in Speech Pathology. Megan enjoys the beauty of language and writes poetry in her free time.

Germani Williams

Germani Nicole is a senior Writing and Communications major. "Writing is my escape. Its my release. It's part of my being. And when you find something that makes you feel this alive you hold onto it because letting it go would mean losing yourself."

AWARDS

Each year, the editorial staff of *Impressions* issues three awards to members of the student body who contribute outstanding artwork, poetry, and prose.

Impressions extends congratulations to the following students for their submissions:

Brian Reid, winner of the *Impressions* Artwork Award

Joshua Loomis, winner of the *Impressions* Poetry Award

Brieana Kepley, winner of the *Impressions* Prose Award

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editors and staff of *Impressions* wish to thank the following for their contributions and assistance to this issue, without which this project would have been impossible:

Carolyn Potter, for her help with event planning and budgeting,

The audiovisual staff at Clayton Center for the Arts, for technical support at outdoor events,

Marian Kelly for her support of our creative events,

The Diversity Action Team, for collaboration during spring's identity week,

Vienna Coffee House, for providing a venue for *Impressions'* creative readings.

Impressions